The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 January 2022

by Mrs H Nicholls FdA MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/D/21/3284799
5 Chewton Farm Road, Christchurch BH23 5QL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Blackhurst against the decision of BCP Council.
- The application Ref 8/21/0375/HOU, dated 12 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 25 August 2021.
- The development proposed is a two-storey rear/side extension to form an orangery on the ground floor with enlargement of existing bedrooms on the first floor, also proposal for a basement cellar.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for two-storey rear/side extension to form an orangery on the ground floor with enlargement of existing bedrooms on the first floor, also proposal for a basement cellar at 5 Chewton Farm Road, Christchurch, BH23 5QL**,** in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 8/21/0375/HOU, dated 12 April 2021, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:

   - Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and any relevant development plan policies, including any effects on openness; and

   - If the development is inappropriate, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the proposal.

Reasons

3. The appeal dwelling is a large detached, two storey house set within a residential area on the outskirts of the Walkford area of Christchurch and within the Green Belt. The area on the western side of Chewton Farm Road is characterised by similarly large, detached dwellings within spacious, verdant plots whereas the opposite side is more open with more limited development.

4. The proposal seeks to add a two storey side extension to infill an existing gap and also provide a basement cellar beneath part of the property. From the evidence, the internal floor area provided by the extension across both floors would be approximately 46 sqm.

5. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open in order to maintain its essential characteristics which are its openness and permanence. It goes on to state that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

6. The construction of new buildings within the Green Belt is inappropriate development, except where involving a limited number of specific exceptions, such as limited infilling in villages, buildings for agriculture and forestry and the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The Framework's glossary defines an 'original building' as: "*A building as it existed on 1 July 1948, or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally*".

7. Policy KS3 of the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan, Part 1 - Core Strategy (2014) sets out the purposes of the Green Belt but does not define the types of development that would be considered inappropriate or not. Saved Policy H14 of the Christchurch Local Plan (2001) permits extensions to existing dwellings within the Green Belt if the proposed extension does not significantly increase the size of the existing dwelling and where the scale, design and materials would be in keeping with the character of the dwelling and its surroundings. Whilst both KS3 and H14 are aged Policies, they are generally consistent with the policies of the Framework relating to Green Belt protection.

8. Despite an absence of absolute clarification in the evidence, the building appears to have been built prior to 1948. Evidence pertaining to the floor area of the original building and its current footprint following extensions in the intervening period is in dispute between the parties, however, I regard the rear ground floor extension as being the most notable addition that has altered the form and footprint of the building.

9. The Council's evidence details that the proposed extension would be a "*small addition*" which would be largely screened from public view by the host dwellinghouse and the boundary hedge. It would infill a modest area between the flank and rear walls of the dwelling, essentially 'squaring it off', providing an external area of patio space and an external stairwell to the basement which would be enclosed by balustrades.

10. Considered in isolation, such a modest addition is not 'inappropriate' under the terms of the Framework, nor would it constitute a 'significant increase' under the terms of H14. I accept that the cumulative effect of extensions to the dwelling have altered its scale and form from that of the original dwelling, but those that have been previously permitted and constructed have had a more noticeable effect in this regard. This particular proposal, given where it would be sited and its modest scale, would not harmfully alter the form of the building's footprint, nor be noticeable within its Green Belt context. The basement would also avoid any notable impact on the character or appearance of the site or Green Belt designation.

11. In my view, considered cumulatively with the existing extensions to the original, generously-scaled dwelling, the proposal would take the dwelling to the upper limits of an acceptable size, maintaining its proportionality, but would not exceed that extent. The extension would not visibly or harmfully alter the form of the dwelling and would not compromise the Green Belt's

openness or permanence. The design and materials of the extension would also be in keeping with the host dwelling.

12. Consequently, the proposal would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and I do not need to consider whether very special circumstances exist to justify it. The proposal therefore accords with Policies KS3 of the East Dorset Core Strategy (2014), H14 of the Christchurch Local Plan 2001 and with the Framework.

Conditions

13. In addition to the statutory time limit, a condition is necessary specifying the approved plans in the interests of certainty.

14. In order to protect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area, a condition is necessary to ensure that the external materials used in the construction of the extension match those of the existing dwelling.

Conclusion

15. For the above outlined above, the proposal complies with the development plan, when considered as a whole. In the absence of any material considerations to dictate that a decision should be taken other than in accordance therewith, the appeal is allowed.

Hollie Nicholls

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.

2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
   - Location Plan, Ref 314/01, dated April 2021
   - Block Plan, Ref 314/02, dated April 2021
   - Site Plan, Ref 314/03 Rev A, dated 07/05/21
   - Proposed Side Elevations, Ref 314/14 Rev A, dated 07/05/21
   - Proposed Front and Rear Elevations, Ref 314/13 Rev A, dated 07/05/21
   - Proposed Basement Plan, Ref 314/09 Rev A, dated 07/05/21
   - Proposed Ground Floor Plan, Ref 314/10 Rev A, dated 07/05/21
   - Proposed First Floor Plan, Ref 314/11 Rev A, dated 07/05/21
   - Proposed Roof Plan, Ref 314/12 Rev A, dated 07/05/21

3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.